

Dialogue on school violence with SA Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)

The PSA attended a meeting with the SAHRC to address school violence affecting both educators, learners, and communities. Attendees were given a platform to introduce themselves and elaborate on their mandate. Amongst the invited were unions, Educator Councils, SAPS, Department of Justice, Department of Social Development, Department of Education and NGOs supporting education sectors. The number of cases reported to the SAHRC encouraged this initiative to understand each role player's mandate. Sadly, the Department of Education and Department of Social Development did not honour the invitation.

Stakeholders present echoed similar sentiments that violence at schools is a cause for concern as it affects communities, learners, and educators and that all role players should start playing their part to curb the scourge against violence at schools. A call to the Department of Education was made to:

- Encourage campaigns by SAPS and Department of Justice to conduct awareness on drug abuse, cyber bullying; sexting, etc. and consequences of engaging in such platforms,
- Owing to an overlap of rights, encourage all affected to play their part for the well-being of schools.
- Encourage *Take a Girl Child to Work* campaigns.
- Address bullying and have concise policies on code of conduct of both learner, educator, and community.
- Expand on sport and training programs to assist in combating the school violence scourge.

The PSA, in combating the scourge, is running a corporate social investment initiative partnered with SAPS on school safety that entails an environment where learners and educators are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use. Safe schools promote protection from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying, and the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds.

The PSA appreciated the initiative by the SAHRC to create a platform to address the common problems experienced by unions and other stakeholders in this regard. A follow-up meeting with the presence of the Department of Education is arranged and members will be informed of developments.

GENERAL MANAGER

